

got his way, for the Generals even resented leaving Belfort to France. 'But he never fought for his policy, and he deserves graver condemnation for the neglect of the *imponderabilia* than the soldiers whose horizon was bounded by strategical considerations. It is possible that Alsace, German in blood and language, might gradually have been reconciled by admission to the federal empire on equal terms with Baden and other South German states. Lorraine, on the other hand, was bound to prove as indigestible as Posen, and Germany, efficient, but heavy-handed and unimaginative, never learned how to win the allegiance of racial minorities.

France never accepted the situation.¹ The thirty-six deputies of the lost provinces in the Bordeaux National Assembly unanimously protested against the cession, and 50,000 inhabitants left their homes within the year allowed for option. A far larger number followed later, particularly from Lorraine, until nearly a third had gone. The story of Franco-German relations since 1871 is mainly the record of France's endeavour to regain her lost territories and of Germany's attempt to retain them. The one remembered the aggression of 1870, the other the settlement of 1871, and the writers of school-books in both countries took good care that the children should inherit the passions of their elders. The statue of Strassburg in the Place de la Concorde was draped in black. There was no finality about the settlement, for the provinces which had been won by the sword might be lost in the next encounter. Family and business ties were severed, French propaganda was active, and the excellence of German administration evoked no gratitude. There were pauses between the rounds, but the wrestlers never left the arena. Each of them sought and found allies, until almost the whole of Europe was

involved in their
vendetta.

While Bismarck kept France in quarantine by alliances or understandings with other Powers, the French rebuilt the fabric of their national life with unexpected rapidity. In no responsible quarter was there a notion of challenging Germany to another conflict for a long time to come. "The *revanche*"

writes Ren6 Pinon,** was the natural and spontaneous reaction, the appeal to the future, arising from the abuse of force. It lived as a sacred ideal in the soul of the nation, but has never been part of the Government programme." France had to

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